Rev. Edward A. Lawrence.
With kind regards of
Miss H. A. D.

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CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION.

A

SERMON

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF MRS. HENRIETTA DANA,

WIFE OF THE REV. SAMUEL DANA.

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MARBLEHEAD,

APRIL 5, 1863,

BY THE PASTOR,

B. R. ALLEN.

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SERMON.

"I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT, BRETHREN, CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP; THAT YE SORROW NOT AS OTHERS WHICH HAVE NO HOPE. FOR IF YE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, EVEN SO THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS, WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM."—1 Thessalonians iv. 13–14.

THE second coming of Christ to take public possession of His kingdom, occupied a prominent place in the faith of the Church at Thessalonica. This great truth and the circle of ideas connected with it and involved in it, under the influence of their excitable Greek fancy, threatened to hurry them into fanatical vagaries, and seriously injure their Christian character and disturb their peace. Their first misapprehension was, that those only who were living on earth when Christ should appear would have part in His kingdom. This of course excited great anxiety concerning their Christian friends who had died, or who should pass away before the Lord should come. And what added greatly to the danger was, that being but recent converts from Heathenism, they could not easily rid themselves of their old prepossession: oftentimes

their Pagan feeling would obtrude into the sanctuary of their faith in Christ, and obscure their hope and distress their hearts. While some mourned over the supposed diminution of happiness to their friends who had died without beholding the glorious advent of Christ; others were drawn into doubts as to the resurrection itself, and of course the safety of their friends who had died in the faith. The tendency of such apprehensions, upon persons with such antecedents and surroundings, could not be otherwise than mischievous. It would weigh down their spirits, check their ardor, shake their constancy under persecution, crush their hearts in affliction, and make them to think themselves of all men the most miserable, and all this was the effect upon them. These misapprehensions and their sad effects were not confined to the Thessalonian Christians; those of the Corinthian Church and those to whom St. Peter addressed his epistles, seem also to have shared in them. There is one aspect in which we may view those early misapprehensions with thankfulness to God, whose it is to bring light out of darkness, and cause even the troubles of His people to promote their own piety and comfort, and show forth the riches of His glory and the triumph of His grace in Jesus Christ our Lord. To those doubts in the early Church we are indebted for that sublime chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians — the 15th — in which the

great Christian truth of the resurrection of Christ as the pattern and the pledge of the resurrection of His people to glory everlasting, is so clearly demonstrated and so gloriously vindicated for all the Church in all the ages; and also for the equally sublime and consoling representation of the same truth in our text and its connections. Forever blessed be his name and his wonder-working spirit in the Apostle for this revelation. How important was this to complete the revelation of the Gospel as a system of light, and love, and power divine; sent down from heaven to give life and light and hope and consolation to man; and especially important and consoling to Christians in the dark night of their sorrow, as they bend over the tomb of their pious dead and weep out the grief of their crushed hearts.

To all such the words of the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the Apostle, impart the wisest counsel and the richest consolation. "I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep — that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." And that nothing might be wanting to rectify the mistakes of his brethren, to establish their faith and comfort them under their trials, the Apostle teaches, not only that those who sleep in Jesus shall assuredly rise again in His likeness when He

shall come; but that their resurrection should precede the transformation of the then living Saints; so that the latter could not even anticipate the former in the participation of his glorious kingdom. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. *Then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. So that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." Now while we may be free from the doubts which so greatly disturbed those early Christians, we are in circumstances which demand the counsel and the consolation of the Gospel.

We are in deep affliction. A beloved wife, a darling mother, a devoted Christian, an affectionate friend, long known and loved, and revered by us all, has been suddenly removed by death. Our hearts are crushed; we bow before God and weep. The consolations of the Gospel were specially designed for such an hour as this; rich and precious at all times, they are richest and most precious when we need them most. This is our only resource, but blessed be the God's infinite grace, this is all we need. Let us seek, then, to understand the teaching of the text so as to enjoy the consolation it imparts.

The Apostle affectionately counsels us so to cherish by faith the Gospel, as that our hearts may not be depressed but comforted by the death of our Christian friends, — that as their death is so vastly different from that of the ungodly, so our sorrow should also be as different from the grief of those who have no faith. The text does not teach us insensibility under our afflictions, — it does not forbid us to grieve when called to suffer the greatest earthly bereavement — the death of our loved ones. God who gave us a being, gave us a desire of well-being, — a freedom from sorrow as well as from sin.

Upon this felicity every affliction makes an inroad, and death the most fearful of all. Death is, in itself, a most distressing event. It is nature's supreme evil — the abhorrence of every living man — the enemy from whose embrace and sight every one recoils, at the dawn, the meridian, and the evening of life. To shrink from its ravages upon ourselves or upon our loved ones, is therefore not an evidence of weakness, but an act of obedience to the first law of our being. Insensibility to evil, especially to such an evil, instead of being a virtue to be coveted, is an outrage upon nature — an insult to God. He who requires us to sympathize with others in their afflictions, surely would not forbid us to sorrow for our own. He does not turn the children of Abraham into stones. Death, we say, is a most distressing event — the oppressive

evil combining all others, which rests universally upon the race. Death destroys both action and enjoyment — mocks at wisdom, strength, and beauty — destroys our plans — robs us of our choicest treasures — breaks up our home — desolates our bosoms — blasts our hopes — crushes our hearts. Death extinguishes the glow of kindness — abolishes the tenderest relations of man — severs him from all that he knows and loves here — subjects him to an ordeal which countless millions have passed but which none can explain, and which will be as new to the last who dies as it was to the first; it thrusts him in a word, without any avail from the experience of others, into a state of untried being, and out upon a world fearful to contemplate, entirely alone. And not only does death separate his victim from the living world, and all those loved ones to whom he was bound in the community of life, but he touches the whole mechanism of man, and shivers it to atoms; that latent and mysterious bond which holds in unity the spirit, soul, and body, gives way before the dread shock, and the whole materialism of his nature suffers a total demolition. Having stripped his victim of all his beauty and strength, his greatness and glory, death consigns him to his dismal domain, and leaves all his laurels to wither in the dust. Alas! at the dread approach of death, those beloved friends whose lives are inwoven with one another, each essential

to the comfort and happiness of the other, and the completeness of the whole, must part. No sigh of devoted attachment, no groan of deep and suffering affection can for a moment arrest his footsteps or avert the consequence of his terrible award. Tears may flow warm and copious from the affliction of conjugal or filial love, but they flow in vain. The heart seized with alarm at the distressing, the distracting thought, may, like the mariner's compass in a tempest, heave and tremble in its frame, — still the doom is inevitable — the blow must fall, and honors, rational enjoyments, virtuous pleasure, and reciprocal love, — all the fondly cherished blessings of social life, like the leaves of the forest when stricken by autumn frosts, loose the life-hold which sustained them, fall to the ground and mingle with the dust. Sometimes the death-scene is attended with circumstances of more than ordinary sorrow, which touch with peculiar tenderness all sympathetic souls and call forth their tears for the bereaved one, like that of the venerable patriarch of the covenant when his beloved Sarah, his bosom companion, gentle and lovely the sweet response of a generous soul — was torn from his side and from his bosom. With a crushed heart the good old man gazed upon the ruin beautiful even in death. And although the rich melody of her voice could charm him no longer, her deep, warm, and ever-abiding love no more cheer his heart, and

beguile the rugged incidents of his life over which infirmities were fast gathering, yet would he gladly have preserved the lifeless form of the dearly loved one, and carried it along with him to the end. But this must not be: that precious body must see corruption. Oh! who can conceive of the anguish of that aged and desolate heart, when imperative necessity wrung from him that bitter request of the sons of Heth: "Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." Death which at all times is a most distressing event, is clothed with heavier gloom in circumstances like those. Is it any wonder then nature trembles before it — that all men everywhere start back with horror at its approach? Reason justifies the fear. Religion, harmonizing with nature, never forbids it.

There is one other circumstance connected with the death of our loved ones, apart from the revelation of the Gospel, which adds great bitterness to our cup of sorrow, — that is, that we shall see them no more forever. Death might come in his most terrific form, and under circumstances the most heart-rending, and tear from our bosoms our choicest treasures, and the stroke be comparatively light, were its effects temporary only. But death adds the seal of permanence to his terrible blow. The precious treasure ravished from us, can never be restored, —

the distressing void in our bosom can never be filled; — hence nature sickens; — the crushed heart weeps tears of blood, and all our hope and joy descend into the tomb of the loved and the lost. Oh! who can paint the anguish of that *last* look of love! who can endure at the death-hour, the distractions of that word—*farewell*—FOREVER! who that has any thought of a future state, can, as he through his tears gazes upon the beautiful form from which the spirit has just fled — sustain the rackings of wild uncertainty as to the place and the condition of the dear departed? This was the state of the poor pagans to whom the apostle refers in the text, when death entered their houses and tore from them their loved ones. In that terrible hour when the heart needs most the Divine support, they had no hope. True, they had some notion of the existence of the soul as separated from the body, and of its happiness in that state. Tradition, fortified by the deep yearnings of nature, had preserved something which faintly shadowed forth the truth. But all these notions were dark and intricate, puzzled with mazes, and perplexed with errors; hence they could afford no satisfaction, could bring no consolation in the dark hour of affliction. They could sing of the soul wantoning in the fragrant luxury of Elysian fields, and endowed with immortal youth; but for this they had no warrant but the imagination, — concerning

it they knew absolutely nothing. The heathen in all the ages and in all the world, have conjectured as to the state of man after death, and their conjectures have varied with their age, and country, and social condition; but they have *known nothing*. The afflicted heart bending over a dying friend demands knowledge, not conjecture; certainty, not imagination; reality, not the confused image of a dream. The spirit departs; — does it survive the body — does it remain conscious after death — does it possess any power of retrospect over earthly scenes — is it immortal — has it entered in its new mode of being upon an unalterable state of sorrow or of joy — of shame or of honor? These are points on which that afflicted heart, in order to the enjoyment of consolation, hope, and peace in that dread hour, demands knowledge, assurance, certainty. But on all these matters the heathen were utterly ignorant, hence in the death of their friends they had no hope, — no comfort. With the resurrection of the body, which they gave up to corruption and the dust, they were absolutely unacquainted. The knowledge of this great truth could not come from nature, nor science, nor philosophy, nor observation, nor experience, nor consciousness, nor human testimony. It is a matter of pure revelation. There are yearnings and reverential feelings towards the dead; — there are the analogies of outward na-

ture — the transformation of the earth-worm through death into a higher form of life, — the forth-putting of the foliage, and the upspringing of the flowers from the grave of their winter's death; these and other things eagerly fall in with the doctrine of the resurrection once made known by revelation; but they could never lead to the discovery or even to the suspicion of the truth, and they never did. The apostles who taught it on the authority of God, were regarded as fanatics, and charged with folly. Under these circumstances, death brought to every pagan house desolation — to every pagan bosom dejection, horror, utter despair, and filled all their tabernacles with mourning, lamentation, and woe. There was no voice of the Comforter; for there can be no room for comfort in that distracted bosom which is destitute of hope. Such was paganism bowing in black despair at the grave of buried love, and such also are all who now reject the Christian revelation of a crucified and risen Redeemer. What have they any more than the heathen to illumine their dying hour, and soothe their struggling and perturbed spirit? What living hope comes from the present Redeemer to smile on the sinking features, and whisper peace and triumph to the retiring spirit, and linger there as in the case of our venerable friend, for hours and days after that spirit had reached its home above? There is none! Aston-

ishment and dismay are the portion of the cup, both of the dying, and the weeping circle around his bed. Heavenly consolation, which all so much need, enters no such house — sits smiling in no such heart. But how vastly different the condition of Christians in the dread hour of death, whether passing away themselves, or resigning their beloved friends to the last enemy. Just so different should be their conduct. We must all resign our Christian friends to the arms of death, and some of us have been called recently to drink the bitter cup. The pang of separation has wrung our hearts. We are not forbidden to mourn.

The crushed heart will bleed; the tears of afflicted love must flow out. It is natural; — it is right. Grief was implanted within us for this very end — tears were made to be shed in scenes like these. A dear friend whom God animates with His love, adorns with His image, honors with His friendship, is the most precious of His gifts — *too* precious to be given up to death and the grave without a tear. No, no! the Gospel of Jesus does not thus mock man by turning him into a stone — by extinguishing those affections calculated to lessen the evils of his sorrowful pilgrimage. Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to save the world, — not to destroy, but to restore man. All that belongs to him except sin and its effects, the Gospel acknowledges, regulates,

exalts. Jesus Himself, the Author of the Gospel — the embodiment of every heavenly grace and moral perfection, dignified as well as vindicated the most sacred of our social feelings, in those groans and tears at the tomb of Lazarus, his friend. Thus beloved in Jesus, sharing His sympathy, we may mourn when our loved ones are snatched from our bosoms by death; but we must not mourn as those who have no hope. For the sweetest, richest hope which God can impart is ours. Inspired with this heavenly hope, our mourning should be Christian mourning — submissive, holy. We should lean upon the breast of our all-sufficient, sympathizing, living Redeemer, and compose our souls to serenity and peace. This is the instruction of the Gospel, — this the counsel of the text. Let us

II. Consider the grounds on which this counsel and this consolation rest. And here they are: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him." Jesus we know died, and rose again, and lives in glory everlasting, our kinsman Redeemer — our constant Friend; hence our hope and consolation in view of the dear ones who died in the Lord, are the richest and sweetest which can inspire the human bosom. Our faith is not an airy fancy, it is a reality; it rests on an imperishable rock — its foundation is firmer than the heavens. Death comes to

the Christian attended with circumstances which if they do not arrest his footsteps, deprive him of all his terrors. He is to them altogether another thing. They *sleep*, says the text. This accords with all the New Testament representations of this event to the children of God. The idea of the apostle was not that the souls of the faithful remain unconscious during the period which elapses between the death and resurrection of their bodies. This cheerless doctrine, entertained by some dreaming speculatists in all the ages of the Church, — which implies that all the faculties and affections of the Christian are suspended by death, and all his opportunities of serving his Redeemer are taken away for centuries, and he remains insensible as a stone — is heaven-wide from the teachings of St. Paul — is contradicted by all he ever wrote — by the covenant of Christ, the genius and promises of the Gospel, and all the instructions of holy Scripture. With this affirmation, which is susceptible of the clearest demonstration, we dismiss this appalling doctrine, which can have charms only for those whose hearts have never been warmed by the love of Christ. The words of St. Paul have quite another sound in the ears of Christian faith, — they are fraught with consolation fragrant as the breath of the morning — refreshing as the dews of heaven to the soul in communion with Jesus. It is a blessed truth that the *bodies* of

the redeemed which at death their souls leave to be with Jesus, do rest in their graves,—sweet sleeping chamber, dark but not gloomy, silent yet delightful, because consecrated by the sacred body of their Lord, and surrounded by the rays of his resurrection glory. And so far as the term sleep refers to believers apart from this, it is to their happy decease —their safe and comfortable departure. It teaches that death comes to the Christian despoiled of his terrors; and is really no more an object of dread than the approach of sleep at the close of day. We of course speak not of the *physical* pangs of dying, but of death as affecting our *moral* being. The former relate to our animal perceptions, and are evils to which in themselves, we are not expected to be reconciled. The best of Christians have been all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. But even here a covenant God, as death approached, has been to them, as he was to the sainted one whom we mourn to-day, better than all their fears, and the physical part of dying was literally a falling asleep. Death to the *un*redeemed comes clothed with awful terrors, because he is the wages of sin. He announces the end of their probation; he closes the door of mercy and ushers them into the presence of the eternal Judge to receive their doom. This makes death so terrible to the impenitent. It is not the brief struggle here which

terrifies them, but that which lies beyond, and to which he conducts them. It is from guilt that he derives his terrifying power. But for the redeemed —the children of a living faith—death has none of this,—he comes as a friend to bear them to their Father's arms and the sweet repose of His bosom, and not to the tribunal of dread judgment. Jesus having redeemed them by his blood from the wrath to come, has for them, vanquished death, and despoiled him of his terrors, and has given them authority to sing as he hands them over the threshold of life,—"O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" In such a case death having lost his nature, deserves not the name. It is only sleep in its most heavenly form—sleep in Jesus.

And then death is to the Christian a cessation from his labors and his sorrows, just as sleep is a repose from fatigue to the toiling, struggling laborer. The life of the believer on earth is a pilgrimage involving struggles, and conflicts, and pains, and toils which the unbeliever knows nothing of. Bound to his Redeemer in a union of life, he must drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism. He is brought into direct antagonism with the world, the flesh, and the devil—with all the principles, and

elements, and influences which are opposed to the master whose servant he is. Henceforward to the close, his life is a conflict with contending hosts — a fight of faith — a struggle for the victory — for the immortal crown. And although there is no doubt as to the final issue, the contest is severe, the child of God often amid his weaknesses and wounds, his trials and tears, longs for the end when the warfare shall cease, and he shall enter into his rest. The end at last comes, and it is peace. His covenant God has promised — "He shall enter into peace," and so the dying Christian finds it. Death approaches, and his sorrows are at an end. The hour of his release from conflicts and contendings is come, and he is to receive his crown. He bids adieu to the field of battle, — lays down the weapons of his warfare, — and laying his head on the bosom of his precious Redeemer, in whose strength he has fought the good fight and triumphed, he goes quietly to sleep. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." What a blessed close! The long struggling saint is at rest. He sleeps. How rich the consolation to weeping friends. Nor is this all. He not only sleeps, but he sleeps *in Jesus*. He lies encircled by covenant arms — enfolded in a covenant bosom. Death has dissolved every other tie, but it cannot separate him from his Redeemer.

The union between Christ and his redeemed ones is infinitely above all changes — remains the same under all circumstances and in all worlds — it is immortal. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come," can touch that divine union. Death and the grave disturb it not. Those who have died in the Lord are in Him still — as much the members of His body now, as when they were serving him on the earth. Follow me into that silent chamber where death has done his work. On that couch lies the body of a saint which, but a moment ago, was the abode of a spirit now in heaven. But was that the only spirit which dwelt in it? Far from this. "Know ye not," saith holy Scripture, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Glorious truth! Death has separated the human spirit from its tabernacle, and sent it on its ascending way up to the glorious throne; but death cannot drive the Spirit of the living God out of his own temple. That body shall change — it must descend to the dust. Such is the universal decree. But the Holy Spirit still dwells there, and will guard it with divine care and love as the purchased property of the Redeemer, inseparably connected with him, to be restored a glorious form to grace his triumphant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. And then from the saints' sleeping in Jesus, we are taught that

all the blessings which belong to them on account of their union of life with him, remain in full force. Not one of them is lost — not one is impaired. They are dead, but they are dead in Christ — that is, they are in Christ although dead. Their life is hid with Christ in God. Nothing can break up the union of life with him, therefore all the rights and privileges of that union must remain undiminished and unimpaired in death, in the grave, and through eternity. He is still their covenant-head, and will be forever. The heavens may fall, the earth may be burnt up, every earthly relation may perish, but the saints are safe amid the ruin. They sleep in Jesus, who ever liveth their advocate with the Father — their kinsman Redeemer — their eternal Friend in whom though dead they still live, and enjoy all the privileges of the blessed union. Finally, these saints sleeping in Jesus shall experience a glorious resurrection. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The resurrection of the body is one of the revealed facts of the Gospel. It is a central truth, encircled by others in intimate and vital relation — an ultimate truth, towards which all the doctrines of grace and the provisions of the new covenant point — a glorious truth, on which the hope of the believer rests, during his pilgrimage of trials and of tears, as the hour of his triumph — the

consummation of his felicity. On this the faith of Abraham fixed its pure and unwavering gaze. To this our Lord himself often directed the faith and hope of his disciples. This was the great theme of apostolic preaching; when the apostles would console believers in affliction, inspire them with courage amid difficulties, hope in the hour of darkness, or prepare them to lie down and die,—they preached Jesus and the resurrection. The doctrine as taught in holy Scripture, and received by the faith of the church in all the ages, is this: The body which we commit to the grave, and which under the sentence of God returns to dust, will be quickened again, and reassume, even after the slumbers of ages, the organization, the lineaments, the expression of that same human being, with whom we were conversant on earth; and be reanimated by that same spirit that forsook it at death. The body is to be raised, however, under circumstances and with properties suited to the new state of being and action on which the saints are to enter at Christ's appearing and kingdom. They will be adorned with Christ's likeness, as well in their bodies as in their spirits. His resurrection being the pattern after which his saints shall be raised, their bodies will be the perfect resemblance of his. "Beloved! it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see

him as he is." "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our *vile body*, that it may be fashioned like unto his *glorious body*." "For as we have borne the image of the earthy" — in the fall which brings us to the grave — "so also shall we bear the image of the heavenly" — in our resurrection out of it. This heavenly is the glorified humanity of our Lord at the right hand of the Father. This is the pattern after which the resurrection bodies of his saints will be fashioned — this the image which they shall bear. As *he* came forth from the tomb immortal and glorious, so also will *they*, — he the fruits, they the full harvest which shall follow. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption — it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory — it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power — it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." And as the change requisite for His glorious exaltation passed upon the body of Jesus, without destroying its sameness; so likewise will such change take place in the bodies of His people without destroying their sameness. As the body of Jesus in which he rose and ascended to heaven, was none the less His body — the one which hung on the cross and lay amid spices in the tomb, *because* of its glorification; so likewise will the resurrection body of the saint be none the less his — the one in which he

prayed and wept, and served God on earth, and out of which his spirit went at death — *because* it is glorified. Whatever Jesus is now, in His glorified humanity, such also will all His redeemed ones be, — the bodies of all the Church must at the coming of Christ — whatever their former state — be made into the same likeness, and *that, the likeness of Christ.* As in all respects in His work on earth and the glory which has followed on His throne and in His kingdom, Christ is the representative of His people, so will they in their raised bodies, be partakers of His kingdom and glory. He will set them on His right hand in the face of heaven. He will present them to His Father, as the sons whom he was appointed to bring unto glory, saying, Here am I, and the children whom *Thou* hast given *Me.* Such will be the resurrection and such the glory of the departed saints sleeping in Jesus.

But will Christian friends recognize each other in heaven? Some doubt this; but we see not why any Christian should doubt it. We have no time at present to examine this point. We simply remark that all the intimations of God's Word favor the recognition of friends in heaven; and those intimations accord with the irrepressible demands of the human soul. Peter, and James, and John, knew Moses and Elijah when they saw them in their glorified bodies on the Mount. Now if those who never met on

earth are to recognize one another in heaven, shall not those who have lived in the sacred intimacies of love here, much more know their loved ones? But the conduct of our Lord after his resurrection, taken in connection with his covenant relation and representative character, we think should put this matter at rest. Were there to be an oblivion of all earthly ties in the grave — were we to know each other no more forever — Jesus would have come forth barely to manifest himself at a distance, and to live apart from those whom he had loved till death. But how different his course! We see him at once hastening to show himself to his beloved disciples, and to assure them of his resurrection and continued love, — doing this in various ways in the social intimacies of friendship for forty days, and until he was taken up. He was now risen and glorified. They knew him as such at the very moment of his ascension. They will recognize him in that same body in heaven. Now, shall his body be the only one which they will recognize in heaven, when they and all the glorified shall in their resurrection bodies exactly resemble his? No, Christian brethren, no! for the same reason and on the same principle that the disciples recognized their master risen from the dead, would they know one another risen from the dead. Thus we may be assured — and it is a glorious, comforting thought — that among all who share his resurrection

and his glory, love remains unquenched — that all the sanctified intimacies of earth will be perpetuated in the everlasting home of the redeemed.

But how are these mighty — these glorious transformations to be effected? To the unbeliever we would say: they are effected by the same power which created the body at first, and which calleth things that are not as though they were. The resurrection is not a *natural* but a *supernatural* event — a fact not of science, but of the Revelation of God; and surely no one who believes in the existence of God will question his ability to bring from a corrupted body, through whatever changes it may have passed in the grave, a body incorruptible, immortal and glorious. It is not science which is wanted here, but faith — faith in God. As our purpose is not the silencing of the caviller, but the comforting of the afflicted believer, we shall direct his faith to the simple and heart-cheering declarations of his God, and not to the demonstrations of science. But what has God said on this point? What do the Scriptures teach? What is the ground of our faith in the glorious resurrection of the saints? This is the question. We affirm that God has engaged "*to raise up His people by Jesus, and to present them together with Him.*" Our resurrection as Christians, then, is a special covenant, provision and promise, — a promise made to Christ as the Head of the Church, for all

and each of his redeemed ones. *He* must realize it; *they* must realize it — it is his right, and their right in him and for his sake. The bodies as well as the souls of his people were given to him to redeem, and he has paid the ransom price with his blood — the whole redeemed man is his and he will claim it at his appearing and his kingdom. The resurrection of their bodies in His likeness by Jesus, will be the finishing of their redemption — their complete restoration to God in His image and their immortal inheritance in communion with him, which was lost in the fall. The Apostle, inspired by the Holy Ghost, presents to Christian faith the resurrection of Christ, not only as the evidence that his people will rise in like manner, but the *pledge* also of the living God to the Church in the presence of the Universe, that they *shall* thus rise: — "Christ the first-fruits, they that are Christ's at his coming." Thus is Jesus *the Resurrection and the Life;* and thus it is made certain that all who die in faith shall rise in glory, — shall thus rise and thus live; the whole being a covenant and federal transaction. Indeed his resurrection was virtually the resurrection of his entire Church. As the Lord Jesus died, so he rose again the covenant head and representative of his people. Having bought them unto God by His blood he came back from the grave to show that the ransom was accepted of the Father, and that their complete redemption was

sure. By his resurrection he vanquished death, and annihilated the dominion of the grave for his covenant ones, taking away for them whatever gave to death, not only his sting but his empire also. The basis of our faith in the glorious resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ, then, is his resurrection as the Redeemer of his church, and their vital union with him as their covenant head — their entire oneness of life with him, so that from him nothing in life, or in death or in the grave, or in eternity, can separate them. Our faith, Christian brethren, rests in the covenant, the promise, the pledge of the Everlasting Father, — in our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the triumphs which he has effected for us who are the purchase of his blood. We need not fear. We rest on the Revelation of God, and that Revelation is the voice of our Creator and Sovereign, and Almighty Father, announcing that "God who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus." This is enough. Our faith cannot fail, our hope shall not be disappointed. Jesus has arisen from the tomb in immortality and glory; and when He comes all His sleeping saints shall, in obedience to His voice, come forth from their graves the sons and daughters of immortality; resplendent in beauty — worthy of His kingdom. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality!" "For He shall change this

vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His most glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself." This is Christian hope; this is Christian assurance; this is Christian consolation. This hope and consolation which all the treasures of earth could not purchase, belong as a covenant gift to the children of faith; precious always, they are the most precious when they need them the most, — when nothing else can comfort and sustain. Inspired with such a faith, resting on such an assurance, how the Christian can triumph when death comes to bear his spirit to God, and consign his body to corruption and the dust. That is his hour of trial, but, blessed be God! — it is his hour of triumph also. The blessed words of the master — "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." These words of the Master revealing himself in all his glory to the dying saint, diffuse calmness and joy over the struggling spirit, and spread over the redeemed countenance the smile of triumph, lighting it up with rays from his resurrection glory. Such is the Gospel of Jesus Christ — such the glorious Revelation of God. In the faith of this the Apostles labored, and suffered, and fell asleep. In this the martyrs bled, and the noble army of confessors

welcomed the stake. In this, Christians in every age of the Church, and in every part of the world, and under every variety of circumstances have closed their eyes to sleep in Jesus. And this Revelation will remain the same to cheer and to comfort the dying saint, and the mourning survivor in every age till the Master shall come. It has indeed chosen our houses to be the scene of its triumphs. It has come home to our bosoms with living power. We are in affliction, and we experience its richness. It has poured its heavenly light upon our night of darkness, and its divine consolation into our cup of sorrow. Its value and its virtue were most beautifully displayed in the life and the death of that blessed woman — that beloved and venerable saint — whose spirit God has taken home, and whose body, so beautiful in death, we have just laid in the tomb, in the assured faith of a glorious resurrection when Jesus comes. Her long pilgrimage is ended. Her faith simple, strong, intelligent, abiding, is changed into sight. She has entered into the joy of her Lord, and her immortal eyes rest with ravishing delight upon the King in his beauty. It is not my purpose to relate the history of her life. That belongs to another; and then some of its richest graces and choicest virtues are known only to those in whose heart she is enshrined for immortality. Mine is an humble service, a tribute due to real worth from strong

affection and pastoral fidelity, — a tribute derived from the observations of nearly nine years of the most endearing intercourse with the fondly loved and deeply venerated mother in Israel. As we are commanded to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, we should study their character so as to imbibe their spirit, imitate their example and be prepared for the same gracious reward.

Mrs. Dana was endowed by her Creator with a combination of qualities which eminently fitted her for the station she was called in His Providence to fill. She possessed an intellect strong, prompt, and inquisitive — a disposition ingenuous, generous, cheerful, gentle — a heart replete with tenderness, and alive to every social affection and benevolent impulse. The whole crowned with that rare and inestimable gift, sound common sense, so necessary to preserve one from those weaknesses and follies which mar the character of so many persons. Such was Mrs. Dana by nature; but this was not enough; she needed supernatural endowments, the graces of the Spirit. In order to fit her for the station she was to fill, and the duties she was to discharge, the Lord brought her to rest in Christ as her Redeemer, in early life; He bound her to Himself in an everlasting covenant which she sealed at his own table when about twenty years of age. Thus for more than threescore years she was in communion with His Church on earth,

adorning her profession with a character exceedingly rich in the number and strength of its Christian graces, and beautiful in its proportions; and a life of entire consecration to Christ and His Church. Her character was mature when first I became acquainted with her, but the rich harvest showed what the planting and the culture had been, — such fruits could not be found on a neglected or wrongly cultivated soil. While it would be difficult in a character where all the graces were so strongly and symmetrically developed, to select any one as the most prominent, still as faith is rather the source from which the others spring — a parent rather than a sister grace — so her faith strong, simple, unwavering, ready for any emergency, was distinguished in that constellation of graces which shed such undying lustre upon her profession. It was seeing Him who is invisible, and enjoying with Him the communings of the most endearing friendship as her God and Father in Jesus Christ ever present, which preserved and strengthened her native cheerfulness amid the decayings of nature, and fitted her so admirably to enjoy the society of her friends, and to entertain them with all the affectionateness of other days; — her heart never grew cold; — it was this which produced that marked patience under the severest bodily pains, — which wrought that (shall we say unmurmuring? No, the word is too feeble) cheerful submission to, and acquiescence

in His will under the greatest personal affliction that any one — especially one with her affectionate heart, and her surroundings as a wife, a mother, and a friend, could ever be called to endure — it was this that enabled her to rise superior to all her crushing trials and infirmities, and seek the public altars of her God on every returning Sabbath, under circumstances which almost any other one would have considered a divine warrant for remaining in her chamber; — it was this same faith which produced that last declaration — Precious Jesus! — as the redeemed spirit struggled to break away from earth and enter upon the immortal fruitions of heaven; — and it was this to which as she was handed over the threshold of life, God her Redeemer imparted that vision of His glory and of her own glorious home, which so remarkably irradiated her dying countenance, and left its halo lingering there as we committed the loved remains to their rest in the tomb; and which spoke to the loved band that encircled that death-bed of peace, of triumph, of heavenly glory already attained, with a power infinitely surpassing the human tongue, and imparted to them a consolation which calmed their grief, and which will remain with them in all its freshness, until they meet her above. But this matured faith was not the product of an hour. It was the ripe, rich fruit of sixty years discipline by the hand of a covenant God ever

faithful. It had increased and become firmly established, through the struggles, and storms, amid the labors, responsibilities, and anxieties of a life-long pilgrimage. She exemplified the beauty of that declaration of holy Scripture, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

Consecrated to Christ and His Church, He received her warmest love, her constant services, her last remembrances. Identified with Him, her countenance would beam with delight when His Church prospered, her heart would be saddened with grief when the Church was in affliction; — for its advancement in the earth, her generous contributions were poured out; — her fervent prayers were offered up. The love of Christ was the constraining power and motive of her heart and life. But her charities were not confined to Church and to Christians; her heart ever warmed to the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, and all such shared largely in her sympathies and her beneficence. And as a Christian, though unwavering in her own faith as to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and closely attached to the church of her choice, yet the love of Christ abounding in her own heart, drew forth her love to all those who bore His image and breathed His spirit, wherever she found them. She never allowed dif-

ferences in the externals of religion to alienate her heart from those who were true to the Divine Head, or interrupt the communion of saints which she loved so well.

More than half a century ago, Mrs. Dana was called to fill a place in this church and parish of great importance and delicacy, requiring a combination of the rarest excellencies both of mind and heart. As the counsellor, sympathizer, and comforter of her husband, and his coadjutor — in her appropriate sphere — in his labors, none sustains a more important relation than a pastor's wife; the happiness, the influence, the reputation, the usefulness of her husband, depend greatly upon her. Mrs. Dana was one of those rare instances of a lady fully qualified for this position, meeting every reasonable claim made upon her, both domestic and public, so as to secure the regard and affection of this whole people. She was better known by the former generation than by the present. By those of them still lingering among us, and those who have gone to their rest since my settlement, I have often heard her spoken of as their old pastor's wife, and always with warm affection and high commendation. But in this regard none knew and appreciated her as did her devoted, and now deeply afflicted husband. She was the sunlight of his home — the life of his life. And were he to give language to the feelings of his heart to-

day, he would doubtless say that the marked success of his long and faithful ministry among this people was, in a great measure, due to the character and the conduct of that richest gift of heaven — his lovely wife. What she was to him as the devoted companion, the wise counsellor, the deep sympathizer, the loving and ever-faithful friend — the delight of his eyes and the joy of his heart for nearly sixty years, and until God took her, I will not presume to attempt a description. His heart lonely and sad, mourning her absence, is the greatest earthly tribute to her worth. The record of her character and her life is in heaven.

As a mother the monuments of her inestimable worth are living. The character of a mother may be known by her children. However wise and faithful the father may be, it is the mother who moulds the character of her children — the mother who places upon them the stamp of true worth. We have no time to dwell upon this fact, nor is it necessary — nay, we are forbidden by propriety, in the circumstances, to say what otherwise we might. But this we may say, never was a mother happier in her children; — never were children more blessed in a mother. Her interests were identified with theirs — her heart and life were bound up with theirs. They appreciated her love, and in their turn gave back to that maternal bosom the full measure of filial reverence and affection. That mutual reciprocation

was beautiful to behold; how rich must its enjoyment have been! How blessed the retrospect now that the fondly loved mother has gone home! Oh, how rich the privilege in our turn to sympathize with a mother's sorrows and infirmities, and rock the cradle of her old age, as she long years ago kissed away our tears, and rocked the cradle of our infancy. It is a rare instance that so many children in mature life meet to bear a beloved mother to her last resting-place in the tomb. They know her worth — they deeply feel her loss. With them in this sad bereavement I most deeply sympathize. I have experienced in my own heart all its bitterness. The death of a mother — especially of such a mother, let our age or her age be what it may, is one of the heaviest afflictions of life; — then dignified manhood bends and weeps. Standing by that grave, where beneath our feet, in the sacred slumbers of a Christian death, lies our dear mother, memory will go back to the nursery, the fire-side, the sick-bed, the anxious care of that maternal heart;— it will recall her gentle look — her eye of love — her kiss at night. The hour of darkness and of trial will come back then and those words, so expressive of a mother's love, pronounced by lips now sealed in death — my child, be patient, be courageous, trust in God, that sent courage into the heart and gave

nerve to the arm, will sound in the depths of the soul and thrill the whole being: —

"Oh! in our sterner manhood when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way —
When girt with sin and sorrow, and the toil
Of cares, which tear the bosom that they soil;
Oh! if there be in retrospection's chain
One link that knits us with young dreams again —
One thought so sweet, we scarcely dare to muse,
On all the hoarded raptures it reviews,
Which seems each instant in its backward range,
The heart to soften, and its ties to change,
And every spring untouched for years, to move,
It is — *The memory of a Mother's Love!*"

But the removal of Mrs. Dana is a great loss beyond that loved circle of her own home. The church she loved so dearly — for whose interests she had labored and prayed for more than half a century — is in deep affliction. The pastor who loved her like a son, and who enjoyed her confidence and affection in a high degree, is bowed down heavily. The choice circle of her friends has been bereaved of its jewel, and weep because she is not. The poor and the suffering, who always found a sympathizing heart and an open hand, embalm her memory with their tears.

Mrs. Dana was a happy, as well as a useful Chris-

tian; the virtues and graces of her character were invigorated and beautified by her habitual communion with God. With the new and living way into the holiest by the blood of the covenant, she was perfectly familiar. Thither the Spirit of God — whose it is to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto the children — daily conducted her, and enabled her to have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. She knew God as her covenant God in the Redeemer, and enjoyed Him as her Father — her Guide — her Portion — her Saviour. Nor did He disappoint her faith, or suffer her hope to perish. He smiled upon her in His Providence as well as in His Grace. She enjoyed life, and she had everything to bind her to it. She was happy in her family, in her friends, and in her Redeemer. Hers was a cheerful, contented, happy old age. She walked with God, and was not, for God took her. And her covenant God — forever blessed be His name — saved her from all those physical sufferings which were the dread of her lifetime, handed her gently over the threshold of life, and placed her in her Redeemer's bosom. He hath done all things well. We could ask no more; — our hearts are fully satisfied. The moment came for the blessed saint to enter into her rest; and with the smile of triumph lighting up her dying countenance with heavenly beauty, she fell asleep in Jesus.

"So fades the summer cloud away;
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
So gently shuts the eye of day;
So dies a wave along the shore."

Thus Mrs. Dana lived, and thus she fell asleep. The devoted wife, the beloved mother, the warm and genial friend, the faithful and ripe Christian — is gone. Her glorified spirit rests with the Redeemer she so dearly loved on earth; her body we have, in assured faith, committed to His sacred guardianship in the tomb to be restored in his likeness — a glorious form.

O! how rich the consolations of the Gospel we have been considering in view of *such* a life and *such* a death! Even in our deep sorrow, we can ask no more. We will look up, and smiling through our tears, thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, for the triumph achieved, and the glory won. We will sing, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." AMEN.

There is another hour of trial, but thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, it is an hour of triumph: it is when our dearest Christian friends are gathered to the tomb, — when the flame of love is extinguished at our hearth-stone, and the voice of

love is silent in our halls, and the fondly-loved form no longer walks there, — when we bend and weep because he is not. O, what could we do, in that dark night of our sorrow, when the crushed heart bleeds, without Jesus and his consolations! But in him, and with him as our Redeemer and Friend, we have all the comfort that our hearts demand, all the consolation which we can receive and God can bestow; — and it was provided for just such an honor as this. O, the glory of the Christian hope! Begone unbelief! Be ye silenced every rising doubt! ye mourners, dry your tears; ye crushed hearts be comforted. *Your* loved ones, and *Christ's* loved ones, — dearer to him than to you, — though they have gone from you, are not lost either to you or to him. You and they will meet again in the house of your Father above. "For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."